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**Annual Financial Town Meeting
June 16, 2021 @ 7:00 P.M.
Barrington High School
Victory Field**

Total Eligible: 14,768
Attendance: 122 @ 6:55 PM
202 @ 7:17 PM
265 @ 7:35 PM
308 @ 8:46 PM
321 @ 9:10 PM
354 @ 9:38 PM
378 @ 11:35 PM

Present:

- **Town Moderator:** Richard F. Staples, Jr.
- **Town Clerk:** Meredith J. DeSisto
- **Town Council:** President Michael W. Carroll, Vice President Robert Humm, Councilman Jacob N.S. Brier (absent), Councilwoman Annelise Conway and Councilman Carl Kustell
- **Town Manager:** Jim Cunha
- **Business and Finance Director:** Kathy Raposa
- **Appropriations Committee:** Chair Stephen B. Primiano (absent), Vice Chair Lisa Daft, John Alessandro, Cynthia Rosengard and William DeWitt
- **School Committee:** Chair Gina Bae, Vice Chair Dr. Megan Douglas, Patrick McCrann, Amanda Regino Basse and Erika Sevetson
- **School Superintendent:** Michael B. Messori, III
- **School Director of Administration and Finance:** Doug Fiore
- **Town Solicitor:** Mike Ursillo

Moderator Richard F. Staples, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:17pm and welcomed everyone to the 2021 Financial Town Meeting.

EXCERPT:

Resolution of the Financial Town Meeting Appropriating \$3,500,000 to Fund the Acquisition and Preservation of the former Carmelite Monastery and the Financing thereof through the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds and/or Notes in an Amount not to Exceed \$3,500,000.

Be it resolved that:

SECTION 1. The sum of \$3,500,000 be appropriated to fund the acquisition of real estate known as the former Carmelite Monastery located at 25 Watson Avenue, Plat 7, Lot 4 in the Town (the "Project") and to raise said appropriation, the Finance Director, pursuant to Section 45-12-2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island with the approval of the Town Council is authorized to issue general obligation bonds therefor in an amount not to exceed \$3,500,000, to issue temporary notes in anticipation of the issuance of bonds, and to issue refunding bonds pursuant to Section 45-12-5.2 of the General Laws.

SECTION 2. The manner of sale, amount, denominations, maturities, conversion or registration privileges, interest rates, medium of payment, and other terms, conditions and details of the bonds and notes may be fixed by the officers authorized to sign the bonds and notes. The bonds and notes shall be signed by the Finance Director and by the President of the Town Council.

SECTION 3. The Finance Director and the President of the Town Council are hereby authorized to take all lawful action necessary or desirable under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), to insure that the interest on any bonds and notes will remain exempt from federal income taxation to the extent provided in Section 103 of the Code, and to refrain from taking any action which will cause interest on such bonds and notes to lose the benefit of exclusion from gross income provided by Section 103(a) of the Code. The Finance Director and the President of the Town Council are further authorized to take all lawful action necessary or desirable to designate the bonds and notes as "qualified tax-exempt obligations" within the meaning of Section 265(b)(3) of the Code.

SECTION 4. This resolution is an affirmative action of the Town toward the issuance of bonds and notes in accordance with the purposes of the laws of the State. This resolution confirms the Town's declaration of official intent, pursuant to Treasury Regulation §1.150-2, to reimburse the Town for certain capital expenditures for the Project paid on or after the date which is sixty (60) days prior to the date hereof but prior to the issuance of the bonds or notes. Such amounts to be reimbursed shall not exceed \$3,500,000 and shall be reimbursed not later than eighteen (18) months after the later of (a) the date on which the expenditure is paid or (b) the date the Project is placed in service or abandoned but in no event later than three (3) years after the date the expenditure is paid.

SECTION 5. This resolution shall take effect upon passage.

Geoff Grove, Robbins Drive, said that this is a surprise to see this motion. We were aware of the motion for \$250,000. He said that this would be a premature vote.

President Carroll explained the process that had taken place these last few weeks. He said that the Town Council had discussed it in Executive Session. President Carroll explained the bid process and that you would not want to announce your bid and lose the opportunity for the community to have senior housing and other amenities for the town. He said that the bid has been tentatively accepted and this evening you will have the opportunity to vote to acquire and preserve this property.

Carla DeStefano, 23 Pine Avenue, said that she would have liked to have seen more information but would like to see senior affordable housing.

William DeWitt, COA member, said that he was confused. Is this preserving or developing? He said sitting as a member of the Committee on Appropriations there was no mention of buying the property.

His discussed trust and transparency regarding the Town Council.

President Carroll said that we did not know that this property would go up for sale, but this is a once in a while opportunity. He said that there will be public hearings to decide what we will do with the property in the future.

Debra Nyser, 30 Adelaide Avenue, said that she was shocked to learn of this. She asked what is the plan? What is the impact with the schools?

Sam Chase, 95 Nayatt Road, questioned why place affordable housing there? He said that even with a month, you could have conducted an impact study.

Christine Squarito, 25 Appian Way, said that to hand this to us at the last minutes is hard to trust and spend this amount of money. She questioned, what are the other options?

President Carroll discussed that they were told we were not the only bidder. He discussed that if the property is developed with more than two (2) homes a portion of the land must contain two (2) affordable homes.

Beverly Migliori, 51 Chachacapasett Road, said that everyone knew that the land was for sale. It is not just the \$3.5 million but now you must need funds to develop it. She said even from an environmental standpoint, the parking lot is not correct. She urged all to vote NO.

Mark Hanchar, 25 Frederick Road, said that there needs to be a finish plan regarding this project. This resolution needs to be WITHDRAWN.

John Conte, 2 Donald Ross Road, questioned the Town Council, how did you know that this was going to be accepted. He discussed that we need an environmental impact study, what costs are involved and questioned open space.

President Carroll discussed if tonight's vote is a no, the opportunity will be lost, and it will go to a developer. Mr. Carroll discussed his concerns for the seniors of Barrington.

Elizabeth Grieser, 42 Watson Avenue asked what do you mean by "preserve"? She asked who is responsible for disseminating this information. She asked where is the plan?

President Carroll said that we do not plan to tear down the building. We would like to preserve and renovate the structure. We (actually) found out today that we have an agreement.

Ann Strong, 55 Teed Avenue, spoke of trust and questioned how the town will move forward. She questioned President Carroll's employment with the diocese.

President Carroll discussed that the agreement was contingent on approval at the FTM.

David Butera, 275 Nayatt Road, said that he likes the idea of developing the building for the elderly but is concerned with cluster building. He said that this is a big unknown. He suggested keeping it as open space for townspeople.

President Carroll said the positive here would be if we own it, we decide and would hold many hearings to showcase our plans.

Steve Venuti, 17 Stanhope Drive said that he is in favor. He discussed that he was on the zoning board and had conducted a zoning update. He said that we need affordable and senior housing. He believes that this is a golden opportunity.

TR Rimoshytus, 1 Howard Street said that the Committee on Appropriations has done a great job. He said that he agrees with Mr. DeWitt that the seniors need a better break. Mr. Rimoshytus said that this project will be costing us millions (maintenance of the grounds etc.). He questioned is this affordable housing or senior housing?

President Carroll discussed that it is both (senior and affordable) but the Town Council has not yet discussed.

Jamie Hingham, Watson Avenue questioned if preservation would have any binding effects.

Solicitor Mike Ursillo explained that to preserve the building you would need to vote yes, and the building will stay in place with refurbishment. Mr. Ursillo continued to discuss R-40 zone, the comprehensive plan, if town does not follow FTM mandates the town could be sued.

Laura Young, 14 Manning Drive said that this is a great opportunity to bring in senior housing.

Irene Inouye, 18 Chachapacassett Road, is in favor of additional affordable housing.

Jaime Treibwasser, Nayatt Road, thanked the COA. She questioned the process and said, is this a scare tactic. She asked, what is wrong with having a development with seven (7) houses which would give us significant taxes. She said that she is concerned with the cost of this project.

Cal Ziwurski said that he is in favor that you have taken the initiative for affordable and senior housing.

Mary Kay Talbot, Fales Avenue is in favor since she lives in a smaller home. She discussed how smaller homes are now being torn down and built twice the size. She said that she would be happy with additional elderly housing. She thanked everyone to give us this opportunity. Do not let this be a PAWSOX situation.

Joan Warren, 19 Adams Point Road, asked why the building must be preserved.

President Carroll discussed how this property is part of our community and for some they do not want to see it torn down. Joan Warren asked if there is a historical significance? Discussion ensued.

Pam Lauria, 56 Martin Avenue discuss that there is no senior housing and not enough affordable housing. She said there are not many opportunities. She said, please do not accuse the Town Council of being dishonest.

Julia Califano, 151 Mathewson Road, said that this is a beautiful piece of property, but we do have senior housing and we have affordable housing. Ms. Califano discussed the Zion property and how it is just sitting there because it is not affordable for the developer to create senior/affordable housing. She strongly urged the town to do their due diligence.

William DeWitt, COA member, discussed how the COA is tasked to present the town with a budget, and we were not given the opportunity.

Mary Alice Gasbarro, 14 Robbins Drive discussed the history of the town's development for senior living and discussed how the price point was discouraging to some because of the expense. She said that she does not think she would be in favor.

VPLisa Daft, COA member said that the COA had a meeting as recent as last week.

Michael Squatrito, 25 Appian Way asked what the maximum capacity of the existing building.

President Carroll said that he did not have this information. Mr. Squatrito asked if there is interest from someone who would want to purchase but not develop. President Carroll said that he is not aware of anyone who would want to purchase and just hold it.

Kathy Larriviere, 25 Rosedale Drive discussed the history of the Carmelite Monastery and the vows of poverty in which they took.

Debra Nyser, 30 Adelaide Avenue continued the discussion of the history of the Carmelite Monastery.

Mr. Staples explained the processes for voting.

Voice Vote: Moderator Staples could not distinguish between the yeas and the nays and called for a standing vote.

Standing Vote: Yeas: 150 Nays: 148

Motion by Geoff Grove, 16 Robbins Drive for a paper ballot.

Standing Vote: Moderator Staples asked all to stand for a paper ballot. He said that out of 298 voters there were 61 people who stood to approve a paper ballot or 20% of the voters. Moderator Staples asked that the members of the Board of Canvassers prepare for a paper ballot.

Paper Ballot: Yeas: 176 Nays: 175 The vote passed.

Ann Strong, 55 Teed Avenue said that she is concerned with the vote. She said, it was too close to call with the standing vote (Yeas: 150 Nays: 148 = 298) and then conducted a paper ballot (Yeas: 176 Nays: 175= 351). She questioned; how we had an additional 53 people voting. She said she believes that this was an illegal vote and asked for the solicitor to weigh in on this matter. She said that she will ask the Attorney General to do so tomorrow morning.

Solicitor Mike Ursillo explained the statute regarding voting under the Town Charter. He said that the secret ballot vote will stand. He said that as long as the voting booths were open people do not have to be in attendance at the very beginning, voters are allowed to enter at any time – there is nothing in the Charter preventing voters coming and voting even in the last five minutes as long as voting is still in progress. Solicitor Ursillo said that we have followed the proper procedures. He said that the vote is proper and will stand.

Jim Jackson, 8 Fireside Drive, said that under the circumstances he made a **motion** to have a recount. **There was a second from the floor.**

President Mike Carroll said that we could have recount after recount and asked when there will be a finality of the vote.

Jim Jackson said that there will always be a question on this vote if there is not a recount.

Deb Nyser, 30 Adelaide Avenue demanded a recount because she said that she does feel that it was a balanced party (a person from one party and a person from another party). We have the most divisive Town Council and now we have a divisive town meeting.

Chair of the Board of Canvassers Claire Boyes showed proof by presenting the receipt from the DS-200 (voting machine). Mr. Staples stated that the Board of Canvassers did a hand count of the ballots as well as produced the count receipt. Mr. Staples said that the vote stands. He asked if (Mr. Jackson) he would like to withdraw his motion.

Frank Iannarilli, 59 Brook Street, said that this recount stands and asked the Moderator to state this motion is out of order.

Mr. Staples consulted with the Solicitor Ursillo and since we have done a hand count and we have the receipt from the ballot machine he declared that **this motion is out of order.**